



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

What is Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)?

Staphylococcus aureus (staph) is a common type of germ called bacteria. It is normal to find this germ on your skin and nose. Most of the time it does not cause any harm. Sometimes, as when the skin is broken, this germ can multiply causing an infection. Signs of infection are redness, swelling, pain or thick drainage (pus). Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a strain of this germ that has become resistant to the antibiotics used to treat “staph” infections. When MRSA causes infection it can be treated but is hard to treat because stronger and more costly antibiotics must be used.

What can be done to prevent the spread of this germ to others?

While you are in the hospital, you will be placed on Contact Precautions. This means that all those who care for you will wash their hands, use gloves and cover gowns when taking care of you. A sign will be placed outside your door to remind those who enter to use these precautions. You should wash your hands carefully before you leave your room. Your family and visitors should practice good hand washing but they do not need to wear gloves or cover gowns, since they will not be caring for other patients.

What other things should I do to prevent the spread of this germ?

Hand washing is the single most important thing you can do. Hands should be washed well with soap and water and dried with clean paper towels. Hand washing should be done:

- before eating or drinking,
- before cleaning up areas with scratches or cuts,
- after using the toilet, and
- after blowing your nose.

Take a tub bath or shower often. Wash your hair every time you bathe. Do not touch or squeeze spots or pimples with your fingers. Keep wounds covered with a dressing until they appear dry. Ask your doctor to look at any wound that is draining, becomes painful, red or swollen.

If you have further questions, ask your nurse or doctor.